(c) if so, what are the reasons of this curtailment whereas the number of rail accidents are continuously increasing every year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) There is no fund with the name 'Railway Security Fund on the Railways. However, Special Railway Safety Fund (SRSP) with a corpus of Rs.17000 crore has been created with effect from 2001-02 for a period of six years for financing renewal and replacement of over-aged assets existing as on 1.4.2001. The provision made under SRSP since 2001-02 is as follows:-

(Rs.in Cr.)

	Budet Estimate	Revised Estimate	Actual Expenditure
2001-02	-	1400.00	1434.28
2002-03	2210.00	2310.00	2486.31
2003-04	2310.66	2350.66	2583.77
2004-05	2933.00	3645.00	3677.78
2005-06	3522.00	3010.00	2783.14
2006-07	2240.00	2153.00	1955.60 (Provisional)
2007-08	1882.00	-	-

Allotment of funds and expenditure under SRSP is based upon phasing of investment required to replace assets within the total amount of Rs.17000 crore. There has, however, been no curtailment of funds.

(c) Does not arise. However, there has been a consistent reduction in number of accidents over the years as is clear from the following table-

Year	Number of accidents
2001-02	415
2002-03	351
2003-04	325
2004-05	234
2005-06	234
20064)7	195

Survey for gauge conversion

†2116. DR. PRABHA THAKUR Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Railway lines proposed to be surveyed for gauge conversion in the rail budget of 2005-06 and 2006-07;

(b) the time limit fixed for completing the survey for said gauge conversion; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) the criteria fixed for sanctioning the work related to gauge conversion after the completion of the survey?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R.VELU): (a) and (b) 7 and 1 number of surveys for gauge conversion of railway lines had been proposed in the Budgets of 2005-06 and 2006-07, respectively. 3 surveys for gauge conversion included in the Budget 2005-06 has been completed. Normally the surveys are completed within a period of two years.

(c) Project Uni-gauge was taken up on 01.04.1992 and the policy adopted for taking up gauge conversion to carry out the conversion of lines at least cost yet providing a standard of service not lower than what the rail users were getting on the Metre Gauge covering the following areas:

(a) To take up conversion of lines to develop alternative broad gauge (BG) routes obviating the need for doubling existing BG lines on these routes.

(b) To establish new BG links between stations connected by other BG lines.

(c) To establish BG connection to ports, industrial centres and locations having potential for growth.

(d) To take up conversion of lines required on strategic considerations.

(e) To minimize transshipment and to improve wagon turn around by avoiding delays at transshipment points.

Many new lines and gauge conversion projects have been taken up on socio-economic considerations for development of backward, hilly, remote and under developed areas.

PCO booths at stations

2117. PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of local/STD,PCO booths owned and operated by handicapped and blind persons at railway stations of the country;

(b) whether there was a decision to terminate their licences;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether Government have given any assurance to regularise their licences and if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether Government have received any representation for regularization of local/STD, PCO booths allotted to them; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Approximately 800 local/STD,PCO booths are operated by handicapped persons at railway stations.